

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 795
By: Goodwin
Transportation
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Concerns have been raised that Texas roadways are becoming more dangerous as a result of the state's rapid population growth. It has been suggested that the current situation has led to higher incidences of traffic fatalities, including daily deaths on Texas roadways for over two decades. C.S.H.B. 795 seeks to improve safety on Texas roads and reduce the number of traffic fatalities by providing for the designation of highway safety corridors that impose stiff penalties for traffic offenses committed within the corridors.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Transportation Commission in SECTION 2 of this bill and the Texas Department of Transportation in SECTION 4 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 795 amends the Transportation Code to require the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to designate as a highway safety corridor a portion of a roadway containing a site with a high number of traffic fatalities, as identified by the governing body of the municipality or county in whose jurisdiction the site is located. The bill requires TxDOT to erect a sign at each end of the highway safety corridor and at appropriate intermediate sites along the corridor indicating the designation is a highway safety corridor and stating "Fines double: highway safety corridor." The bill authorizes TxDOT to distribute literature to the public concerning designated highway safety corridors and establishes the method for setting the minimum and maximum fines for certain offenses committed in a highway safety corridor.

C.S.H.B. 795 requires the Texas Transportation Commission and TxDOT by rule to establish processes for the governing body of a municipality or county to identify sites with high numbers of traffic fatalities and to inform TxDOT of the sites identified for designation as highway safety corridors.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 795 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute does not include the following provisions included in the original:

- a specification that the literature authorized to be distributed to the public by TxDOT under a traffic safety program is literature concerning highway safety corridors;
- a requirement for TxDOT to designate as a highway safety corridor a portion of a roadway containing one of the 500 sites in Texas with the highest number of traffic fatalities, regardless of whether TxDOT has established an applicable traffic safety program; and
- an authorization for TxDOT to include on the highway safety corridor sign the information required for a highway safety corridor and the information required for a traffic safety sign.